

master must prove a contract (by the person he claims) to perform labor, or he has no claim upon him at all.

This is a view I do not recollect to have seen stated. Certain it is that it is lost sight of by nearly all, or quite all, our great men.

A conviction of the truth of this position must be my apology for offering my opinions on the subject. Respectfully thy friend,

ARTHUR SHARP,
Near Fairhaven, Ohio.

THE NATIONAL ERA.

WASHINGTON, SEPTEMBER 12, 1850.

THE POSITION OF THE NATIONAL ERA.

On the eve of our departure from Washington, we stated, in an editorial article, our views respecting the policy of abducting slaves—views held by us from the time we became an advocate of the Anti-Slavery Cause. That article was intended as a complete definition of our position, and a final disposition, so far as we were concerned, of the subject of which it treated. Our opinions, we know, differed from those entertained by some Anti-Slavery men, but as our object was, simply to present a clear statement of the rule of our own conduct, not to dictate to others, we resolved, with no feeling of disrepect towards any one, to decline all discussion of the subject.

It was, therefore, with profound regret that we observed in the *Era* of the 29th ult., an article in reply to certain animadversions of the *Free Presbyterian*, especially in its well-calculated, though not designed, to place the *Era* in a false position. Considered by friends who furnish editorial matter during my absence forbids all captious oppositions, but a regard for Truth constrains me to say, that with my whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, I repudiate the principle embodied, and in the following sentences of the article referred to:

"He [the citizen] is therefore morally, socially, and politically bound to obey the laws of the land, whether he believes them to be just or not. He is further bound to obey what he believes to be unjust laws, because he is privileged to make petition, and vote against their continuance."

The proposition, stripped of extraneous matter, and in its plainest form, is this: If the law of the State in which I live, requires me to do an unjust act, I am morally bound to do it; a proposition which I could not assent to, without denying the existence of a God or the supremacy of his authority.*

To me, Human Law has no sanctity, no authority, any further than it is a transcript of, or in harmony with, "the Higher Law," the Divine Law, the Law of Nature, the Law of Him who has created all things, and has paramount authority over all things. If it receive my reverence and obedience, it is because it is *just* and *true*, and has therefore the sanction of Him whom alone I acknowledge absolute allegiance, and not because of the existence of Human Penalties or rewards. I recognize no sanctity, no authority in any Human Law which is in conflict with the Divine Law. If it requires me to do a moral wrong, it requires what the Universe has no right to require, to commit an act of rebellion against the Supreme Lawgiver. I will not do that wrong, will not despoil the Law and submit to that penalty. Disobedience is demanded by my allegiance to Justice and Truth; submission, by my respect for Peace and Order.

I shall not now argue those positions: it is sufficient for me to state them concisely and plainly, so that there may be no misapprehension of the ethical principles that control the columns of the *National Era*.

My views of the policy of abducting slaves were fully presented in the *Era* of the 15th ult. I wish to add nothing to them, subtract nothing from them, qualify them in no respect.

G. BAILEY.
Lynn, Mass., Sept. 1, 1850.

* Remarks by the *Era* pro tempore.

A moment's consideration will show that Dr. Bailey has totally misconstrued the paragraph quoted, and it is due to me that I should have the privilege of saying so through the columns of the *Era*. He has confounded two things essentially different, viz: doing and suffering. The proposition to which he objects is, that men are bound to obey unjust laws—*sicutum* would have been a more appropriate word, and would have conveyed my meaning more definitely. But submission is obedience, and, therefore, the word is not out of place.

Laws rarely command the citizen to do a particular thing—they are almost invariably *prohibitory*, so far as they affect the mass of the citizens, not commanded. The command is directed to the officer of the Law. Men are not commanded to hold Africans in slavery—they are only prohibited from assisting the slave in escaping from his owner. Dr. Bailey submits to the prohibition, although he holds it to be unjust. He does so in the conviction that submission to the injustice is a less evil than would result from the infraction of the law—in other words, he feels bound, as a good citizen, to obey the injunction of the law. Of the obligation of laws commanding unjust actions, I entertain the same opinion with Dr. Bailey. I hold that no human authority has a right to command me to do that which my conscience condemns as wrong; and I should feel a perfect right to disobey such a regulation. But, in point of fact, I never have been called upon to perform such an action. I have lived all my life in the atmosphere of slavery, and yet the law has never required me to do anything inconsistent with my sense of right—perhaps with a single exception. I allude to the police regulations of the slave States, which require all persons to serve on the patrol, and to punish slaves for conduct which I hold to be innocent. But even in this case no one is actually compelled to serve. It even has the effect of deterring or of paying a trifling fine; and such is the case in all similar instances.

I might fortify my position by the authority of the New Testament, the recognised standard of morality throughout Christendom. We are commanded to "resist not evil," and to "submit ourselves to the higher power," and in obedience to these injunctions the early Christians submitted to a thousand unjust laws, while they freely suffered martyrdom rather than execute them. In a word, they felt bound as good citizens to suffer injustice, but never to inflict it in the name of law.

CANDIDATES FOR CONGRESS.

Many of the members of the present Congress are candidates for reelection. We hope that our readers among their constituents have kept watchful eyes upon their action during the session now drawing to a close.

Those who have proved untrue to Freedom during the recent struggle should be defeated at all hazards. Better send new men, even if no better than their predecessors, than return those who have once proved unfaithful. Let them be punished, whenever may succeed. The example and warning will do good.

In no case should any anti-slavery man vote for any candidate for Congress who will not distinctly stand in writing—

1. That he will vote for and cordially support a bill to prohibit slavery in the Territories.

2. That he will vote for and cordially support a bill for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia.

3. That he will steadily and inflexibly oppose and vote against the admission of any new or slave State, whether erected out of Texas or the Territories.

4. That he will neither support nor vote for any person as Speaker of the House of Representatives who is not known to be ready and willing to organize the Committee of the House to give the freedom of the Free States their just influence in the business of legislation.

These are now the vital points of controversy between the allied forces of Hunkerism and the Slave Power against the Jeffersonian Democracy. Every energy of Freemen should be brought to bear upon them. Hunkerism and the Slave Power, regard the question of prohibiting slavery in

the Territories as settled. Let them learn their mistake at the ballot-boxes. A seat of Government unaccompanied with slavery is essential to freedom of legislation. No one can estimate the social influence of a slaveholding city against Freedom. The struggle for more slave States is to be renewed at once. The people of the Free States should at once prepare to meet it. Webster and others have endeavored to deliver them into the hands of their adversaries on this question. Let the bands be burst as by Samson. But, above all, let freemen look to the organization of the House and the Senate. With the committees of the two Houses against them, next to nothing can be done. The election of a slaveholding Speaker determined at this session the results which have been actually witnessed. The combination of the caucuses of the old parties in the Senate so organized the committees of that body that no measure favorable to Liberty could receive the sanction of any one of them. The people must look to these things. If they would see to their own elections of Representatives, and to the choices of Senators by their State Legislatures.

For the National Era.
SHORT NOTES ON FRENCH MANNERS.

But the Hunkerism of Democracy was reduced to a corporal's guard. The result in Maine is not yet ascertained; but the best hopes are cherished. In Wisconsin, also, and in Ohio, the social influence of a slaveholding city against Freedom. The struggle for more slave States is to be renewed at once. The people of the Free States should at once prepare to meet it. Webster and others have endeavored to deliver them into the hands of their adversaries on this question. Let the bands be burst as by Samson. But, above all, let freemen look to the organization of the House and the Senate. With the committees of the two Houses against them, next to nothing can be done. The election of a slaveholding Speaker determined at this session the

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HOW PEOPLE GET MARRIED IN FRANCE.

When novels finish, I begin—for marriage, if the end of young ladies, is the beginning of society. In France, it is the peculiar institution, the jutting point which first catches the eye of a foreigner. If there were not some such salient angle, I should be embarrassed where to commence these notes—for Johnny Crapaud, as the Englishman calls his lively neighbor, offers few inequities on his polished surface. With Johnny, the reverie is true: one may always take him by the horns, or by any other part of his rugged coat.

French women are seen everywhere: they meet you at the custom-house when you land, receive you at the hotel, sell to you at the bazaar, and charm you always. Your first walk on arriving at Paris is to the famous promenade of the Boulevards, and thence to the Champs Elysées. What soft cohorts of sparkling-eyed hours meet the gaze! what gentle rustling there is of silks and muslins! The air, too, is exhilarating and redolent with the most delicate perfumes. Little feet twinkle under the cloudy folds of poplins and watered silks. Beauties with complexions of every tint, from the rose-leaf hue of the Normandy girl to the rich brown of the daughters of the Pyrenees, recline in graceful languor on the velvet cushions of the salashes and phantoms that roll so noiselessly along.

But a gentleman is not forced to wait until he is asked; nor is he forced to wait for a reply to his proposal before popping the question. Indeed he may do so without having seen the lady at all; and no one thinks him at all eccentric. This fashion has its advantages. We will suppose you a wealthy Larivière in physiognomy, with a young lady at your service, need he wait in the streets, or thronged with her, who would run away at a waltz, before appearance pleases you, and send a friend at the instant to present your proposal to the father, and convince him that the alliance is safe? Not so. Next day, when he has scolded him roundly for giving a lady the mittens. But a gentleman is not forced to wait until he is asked; nor is he forced to wait for a reply to his proposal before popping the question. Indeed he may do so without having seen the lady at all; and no one thinks him at all eccentric. This fashion has its advantages. 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